

THE HEALTH CARE CONGRESS: WORKING TO IMPROVE QUALITY, ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR ALL AMERICANS

Working with President Obama, the 111th Congress has made health care a top priority, already taking major action to expand coverage for uninsured children, invest in critical health care initiatives, and lay the groundwork for comprehensive health care reform. In addition, the House has passed several measures to strengthen public health programs and invest in quality-enhancing services.

Democrats Log Significant Health Care Accomplishments

In February, President Obama signed the reauthorization of the **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)** into law. This historic legislation, vetoed twice by President Bush, covers 11 million children, including an additional 4 million uninsured but eligible kids. With rising unemployment and more families struggling to afford health care, this children's health bill is more critical than ever.

In February, President Obama signed the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act** into law, which included the following critical investments in health care:

- Health information technology (IT) to help grow jobs in this sector, reduce health care costs and improve quality by jumpstarting efforts to increase the use of health IT in medical facilities
- Prevention and wellness programs to fight preventable diseases and conditions with evidence-based strategies
- Biomedical research in areas such as cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease and stem cells, and to improve NIH facilities
- Funding for programs to evaluate the effectiveness of health care services and treatment options
- Funding for community health centers, immunization programs, senior nutrition, tribal health care and public health workforce

In early April, the House passed the **Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act**, which grants the Food and Drug Administration authority to regulate the advertising, marketing, and manufacturing of tobacco products.

The House passed **eight public health bills** in recognition of this year's Public Health Week:

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| 1) Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Act | 5) Vision Care for Kids Act |
| 2) National Pain Care Policy Act | 6) Dextromethorphan Distribution Act ("Cough Syrup" Bill) |
| 3) Wakefield Act (Emergency Medical Services for Children) | 7) Health Insurance Restrictions and Limitations Clarification Act |
| 4) Melanie Blocker Stokes Mom's Opportunity to Access Health, Education, Research, and Support for Postpartum Depression Act | 8) Supporting the Observance of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month |

The 111th Congress Makes Strides on the Path to Comprehensive Reform

FAST FACTS: DEMOCRATS FOCUSED ON REFORM		
The three committees of jurisdiction have conducted 12 hearings on health care reform.	Over the April District Work Period, Democrats held more than 150 health care related events in their districts on the need for reform.	The goal is to pass a comprehensive health care bill through the House by August.

This week, Congress passed the **FY 2010 budget conference report**, which supports the President's goals for health care reform, taking appropriate action to address rising costs and develop a long-term plan for success:

- Supports President Obama's principles for comprehensive health care reform – *Improves quality, expands coverage, confronts rising costs, and provides Americans with a choice of health plans and physicians, including the opportunity to keep their current health plan*
- Assumes that health care reform will be paid for so that it does not add to the federal deficit
- Provides reconciliation instructions as a fallback option to consider health care reform in the event that Congress has not acted by the fall